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Message Text

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14-L
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSC-05 INR-07 CIAE-00 SAJ-01 PRS-01

EB-07 SP-02 L-03 IO-11 OES-03 ACDA-05 DODE-00 H-02

PA-01 SS-15 USIA-06 /082 W
---------- 121307
R 040837Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1240
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, OTRA, SV, SU, NO
SUBJ: MINISTERIAL VISIT TO SVALBARD; PRESS ACCOUNT OF NANSEN DRIFT STATION PROJECT

REFS: (A) OSLO 0722, (B) OSLO 0265

1. BECAUSE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UK-ICELAND FISHERIES DISPUTE FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND CALLED OFF HIS PLANNED VISIT TO SVALBARD (OSLO 0722, PARA 4). JUSTICE MINISTER VALLE DID MAKE HER PLANNED VISIT, BUT ALL PARTICIPANTS IN VISIT RETURNED TO OSLO AND PROMPTLY LEFT ON NORWEGIAN WINTER HOLIDAYS. EMBASSY WILL REPORT ON VALLE VISIT NEXT WEEK WHEN THEY RETURN.

2. SINCE SOVIETS REFUSED HIM VISA TO COVER SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS IN MOSCOW, OSLO CONSERVATIVE NEWSPAPER "AFTENPOSTEN" CORRESPONDENT NILS MORTEN
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UDGAARD VISITED SVALBARD DURING TIME OF VALLE VISIT INSTEAD.

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IN GENERALLY FACTUAL REPORT ON SOVIET-NORWEGIAN PROBLEMS ON SVALBARD, HE MADE AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO PROPOSED U.S. NANSEN DRIFT STATION PROJECT AND SAID THAT THE U.S. IS NOT EXPECTED TO ESTABLISH ECONOMIC UNDERTAKINGS ON SVALBARD BUT "A MORE LIKELY ALTERNATIVE IS A LARGE SCIENTIFIC BASE OF 100-200 MEN, POSSIBLY WITH HELI-COPTERS."

3. WE QUERRIED UDGAARD PARTICULARLY ON THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECT BUT HE SAID HE WOULD NOT REVEAL HIS SOURCE AND ONLY COULD SAY HE HAD LEARNED THIS IN HIS TALKS ON SVALBARD.

4. THE PROJECT WILL STIR CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN NORWAY AND THE SOVIET UNION, EXPECIALLY IF IT INVOLVES AS MANY PARTICIPANTS AS THE NEWS ACCOUNT INDICATED. IT IS NECESSARY FOR US TO KNOW DETAILS OF THE PROJECT, AS WE ARE CERTAIN TO GET QUESTIONS ON IT. ADDITIONALLY, WE HAVE BEEN ASKED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IF OTHER COUNTRIES, IN PARTICULAR THE USSR, WILL BE INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THE RESEARCH,

5. WE HAVE OBTAINED FROM DIRECTOR GJELSVIK OF THE NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE A COPY OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (NRC) POLAR RESEARCH BOARD NOTICE AND CALL FOR COMMENT ON SCIENTIFIC OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO THE NANSEN DRIFT STATION DATED JAN 14, 1976. IT PROVIDES HELPFUL INFORMATION ON PROJECT BUT GIVES NO DETAILS ON NUMBERS OF PEOPLE OR FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT INVOLVED.

6. IF WE ARE ASKED QUESTIONS ON PROJECT WE WOULD REPLY ALONG LINES OF NRC DESCRIPTION. BUT WE WOULD APPRECIATE MORE DETAILED ACCOUNT OF PROJECT AND PLANNING DEVELOPMENT.
BYRNE

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